



William Shakespeare's

CORIOLANUS

Directed by David Muse

 SHAKESPEARE THEATRE COMPANY

FIRST FOLIO:

TEACHER AND STUDENT RESOURCE GUIDE

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Consistent with the Shakespeare Theatre Company's central mission to be the leading force in producing and preserving the highest quality classic theatre, the Education Department challenges learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern perceptions. We hope that this *First Folio: Teacher and Student Resource Guide* will prove useful to you while preparing to attend *Coriolanus*.

First Folio provides information and activities to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production. *First Folio* contains material about the playwrights, their world and their works. Also included are approaches to explore the plays and productions in the classroom before and after the performance.

First Folio is designed as a resource both for teachers and students. All *Folio* activities are designed to support grade 8-12 Common Core standards in English Language Arts. We encourage you to photocopy these articles and activities and use them as supplemental material to the text.

Enjoy the show!

The *First Folio Teacher and Student Resource Guide* for the 2012-2013 Season was developed by the Shakespeare Theatre Company Education Department:

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Table of Contents

Synopsis	3
Who's Who	4
Who Rules in Rome	5
Shakespeare's Verse & Prose	6
Classroom Activities	7-9
Discussion Questions	10
Resource List	11
Theatre Etiquette	12

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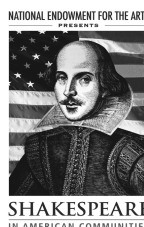


Leadership Support

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Coriolanus Synopsis

Rome's citizens are on the brink of rioting over a food shortage, angry that the Roman nobility has been hoarding grain. They are demanding the right to set their own price for corn when Menenius Agrippa, a noble, attempts to calm them. Caius Martius, a military hero, arrives. He scorns the citizens and tells Menenius that the rioting has won them a concession: citizens may choose five Tribunes to represent them in the Senate. Two of the men they have chosen are Sicinius and Brutus. News arrives that Rome is about to be invaded by a neighboring tribe, the Volscies, and the Roman generals Cominius and Lartius ask Martius' to help defeat them. He agrees, eager to fight Aufidius, the Vulcan general and his enemy. When the nobles leave, Sicinius and Brutus discuss their hatred of Martius.

Volumnia, Martius's mother, lectures his wife, Virgilia, who is afraid Martius will die in battle. Volumnia disagrees, hoping he will be wounded and gain honor, and scoffs at Virgilia's fear of violence.

Fighting begins in the Vulcan city of Corioli, and the Romans retreat. Martius curses his troops and forces his way alone through the city gates. Soldiers who see him trapped in the city believe he is dead. Suddenly he bursts out of the gates and the Romans rally to his defense and conquer the city. Though bleeding, Martius insists on going to the aid of Cominius, who is fighting Aufidius' troops. Cominius is in retreat, but Martius leads a new attack. Martius defeats Aufidius and his soldiers and leaves Aufidius humiliated.

Martius objects to acclamation and a fanfare of trumpets proclaiming him victor of the war. Cominius honors Martius with the new surname "Coriolanus," in recognition of his role in taking Corioli. In defeat, Aufidius vows he will kill Coriolanus by any means possible.

Menenius criticizes Brutus and Sicinius for their hostility to Coriolanus, their pretension to wisdom, and their exploitation of the common people. Coriolanus enters Rome in triumph, greeting his mother and wife; the nobles escort him to be honored in the Capitol. Alone, Sicinius and Brutus discuss their distrust of Coriolanus, who is now expected to be elected Consul, one of the highest Roman offices. They believe he is too prideful to show his scars to the citizens in the marketplace and ask for their approval, as tradition requires. They plot to turn the people against Coriolanus and keep him out of power. In the Senate, Coriolanus is elected as Consul but cringes at wearing the "gown of humility" in the marketplace. Menenius convinces him that he must honor the tradition. He seems to agree, but when the citizens arrive he refuses to show his scars. When he is gone, the Tribunes stir up anger in the crowd, rally the citizens against Coriolanus and lead them to the Capitol to revoke their approval of his consulship.

Lartius informs Coriolanus that Aufidius has retreated to Antium. Brutus and Sicinius block Coriolanus's way to the marketplace, where his consulship will be announced. They provoke him to insult the citizens and attempt to arrest him. Coriolanus resists, and a fight ensues. The citizens retreat and Coriolanus is hustled home by the nobles. Menenius attempts to calm the mob and agrees to bring Coriolanus to the marketplace. At home, Volumnia tells her son he must apologize humbly before the mob. At first refusing to placate the people, eventually Coriolanus promises to speak mildly. Meanwhile, the Tribunes coach the citizens on how to respond to Coriolanus and plot to provoke him again. When he returns to the marketplace, he discovers the people have revoked their votes for him and he scorns them. Sicinius calls him a traitor. He explodes with anger and the citizens banish him. Coriolanus leaves, bitterly denouncing Rome.

Volumnia and Virgilia bid farewell to Coriolanus, who promises to keep in touch. The women then meet and angrily rebuke the Tribunes. Coriolanus travels to Antium and seeks Aufidius's house, where a feast is in progress. Renouncing Rome, Coriolanus pledges allegiance to Aufidius and offers to let Aufidius slit his throat. Aufidius embraces him as an ally.

In Rome, the Tribunes congratulate themselves, until they hear news that two Vulcan armies are in the field. Cominius reports that the Roman provinces are giving in and citizens are filled with fear and regret.

Near Rome, Aufidius tells a Lieutenant that Coriolanus has won the soldiers' hearts, but he hates being overshadowed and intends to destroy Coriolanus after the war.

The Vulcan armies are approaching Rome. Cominius and Menenius both go to Coriolanus to convince him not to attack and burn Rome, but Coriolanus refuses to see them. A little later, his family arrives and instead of turning them away, he goes at once to kiss his wife and kneels to his mother. Volumnia pleads for peace, showing that unless Coriolanus relents she will die in the burning of Rome. Coriolanus reluctantly agrees.

In Rome, Sicinius fears for his life, but a report comes that the Volscians have retreated. Rome rejoices, and Volumnia's party enters Rome in great triumph.

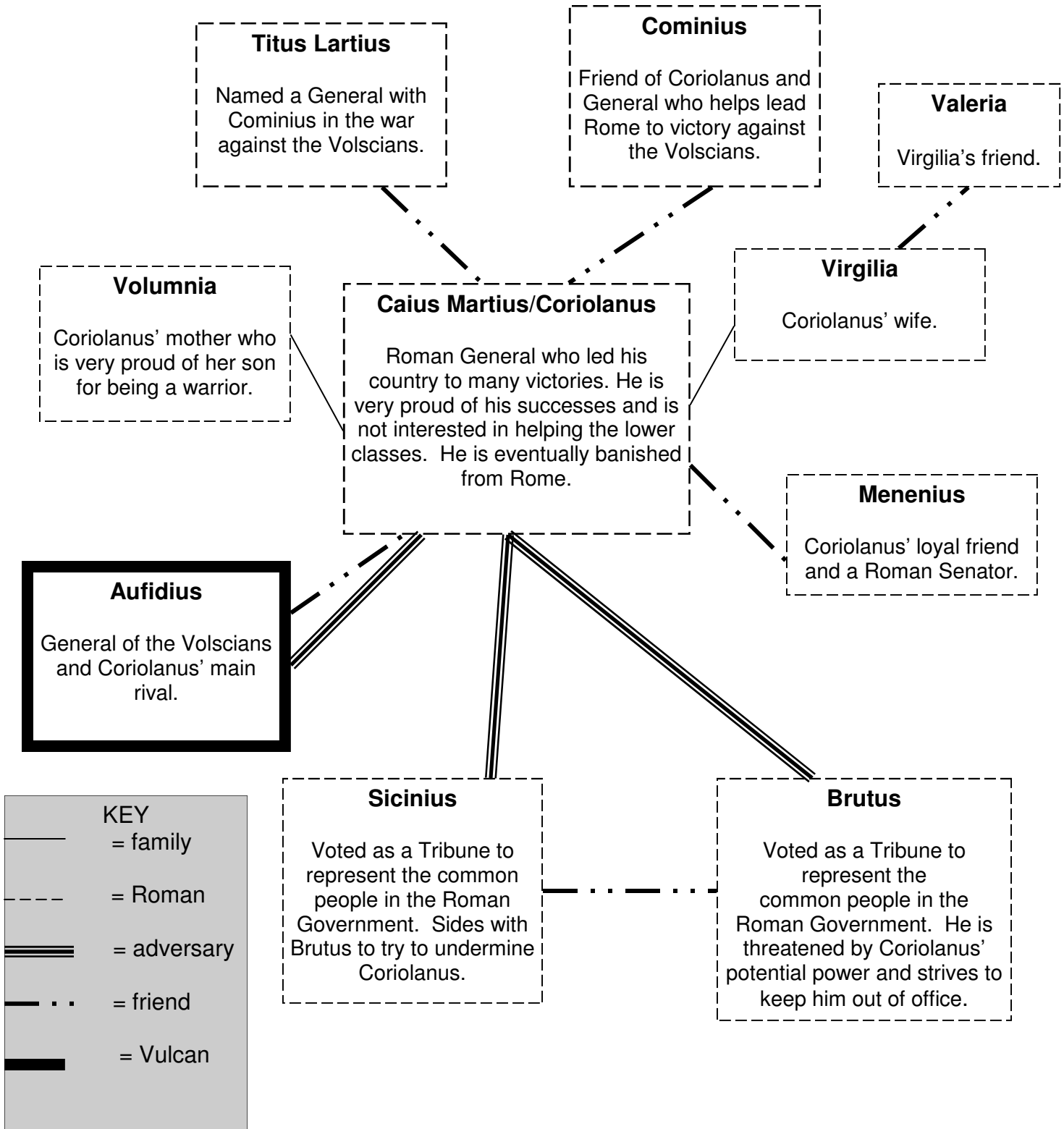
In Antium, Aufidius plots with assassins to kill Coriolanus before he can break the news of the peace terms. Coriolanus enters in triumph. Aufidius insults him and calls him a traitor. Outraged, Coriolanus tries to fight but the assassins stab him, and he dies.

WHO'S WHO in *Coriolanus*

The world of Coriolanus is one where love and fierce, uncontrollable hatred, honor and dishonor, love of country and rejection of any ties of loyalty, can never be disentangled.

It is...a world disturbingly like our own, in a state of seemingly continuous warfare, with no quarter, conditions that test the values by which we purport to live. The martial hero, despising the rituals of civilization, becomes a ravenous beast in a savage universe where, in a moment, predator can turn into prey.

-Warren Chernaik, Emeritus Professor of English in the University of London



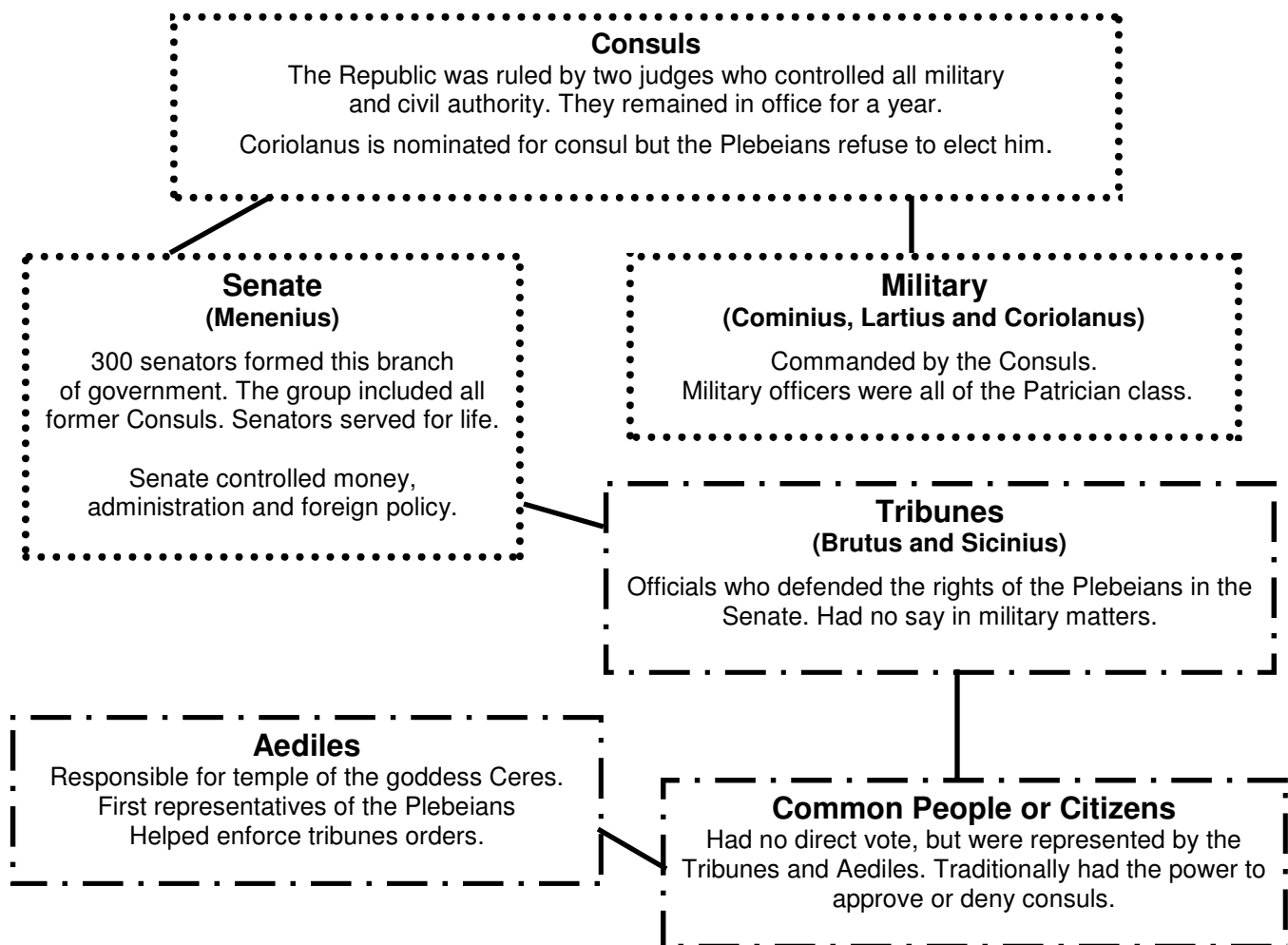
Who Rules in Rome

Shakespeare depicted the world of ancient Rome for his Elizabethan audience. Political leadership and power were as different between those two societies as the monarchy of Shakespeare's day is from our current democracy.

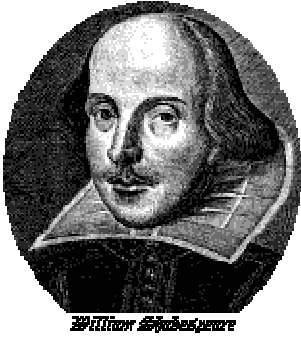
Coriolanus takes place during the period of the Roman Republic. Rome had left a monarchy in favor of the Republic only a decade earlier. The structure of power was relatively new and this caused tension between the various members of society.

Power was clearly divided between the higher Patrician class, which contained the senate, military and the wealthiest Romans and the lower Plebeian class comprised of the common people.

KEY	Patrician Class from the Roman word for "father" The upper classes of Roman Society	Plebeian Class The lower classes of Roman Society Also referred to in <i>Coriolanus</i> as the citizens



Shakespeare's Verse & Prose



During the Elizabethan period, "English" was a relatively young language (only about 160 years old) combining Latin, French and Anglo-Saxon. There was no dictionary or standardized literacy education. People in Shakespeare's London spoke much more than

they read, causing the rules of grammar and spelling to be quite fluid. Writers created new words daily and poets expressed themselves in a new form of writing known as **blank verse**, first appearing in 1557 in *Certain Bokes of Virgiles Aenis* by the Earl of Surrey:

They whistled all, with fixed face attent
When Prince Aeneas from the royal seat
Thus gan to speak, O Queene, it is thy will,
I should renew a woe can not be told:
(Book II, 1-4)

That the verse was "blank" simply meant that the poetry did not rhyme, allowing rhyme-less poets such as Virgil and Ovid to be translated and Elizabethan playwrights to emulate the natural rhythms of English speech within **iambic pentameter**.

A typical line of verse from this time contains five units of meter or **feet**. Each foot contains two syllables. When the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed (dee DUM), it is an **iamb** (iambic meaning push, persistency or determination). The prefix **penta** means five, as in the five-sided shape—a pentagon. Iambic pentameter is therefore one line of poetry consisting of five forward-moving feet.

It was this new tradition of blank verse in iambic pentameter that Shakespeare inherited as he embarked on his career as playwright and creator of the greatest poetry in the history of the English language. Similar to the human heartbeat, a horse gallop or the beat of a piece of music, iambic pentameter drives and supports Shakespeare's verse, moving the language along in a forward flow that emulates the natural speech and rhythms of life. Here is a standard line of verse in iambic pentameter from *Coriolanus*.

His nature is too noble for the world:
(act 3, scene 1)

If we were to say the rhythm and not the words, it would sound like this:

dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM

When we **scan** a piece of text (marking it with a "˘" for the unstressed and "/" for stressed), we simply tap out the rhythm of the line, based on dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM dee DUM, to see if the line is structured in iambic pentameter:

˘ / ˘ / ˘ / ˘ / ˘ /
His nature is too noble for the world:
(act 3, scene 1)

Prose in Shakespeare's work is not in iambic pentameter and relies more heavily on other literary devices for its speed and rhythm. These devices include: **antithesis** (setting opposite words against each other), **lists** (series of actions or descriptive words that build to a climax) and **puns** (the use or misuse of a word to mean another word). Shakespeare used prose to express conversation between the lower classes, like the Mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or familiar or intimate scenes, as with Henry and Katherine at the end of *Henry V*. He also utilized prose to express madness or vulgarity, as in the nunnery scene of *Hamlet*. The exact meaning of a shift from verse to prose is not constant, but it always signals a change in the situation, characters or tone of a scene. Only *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* rely almost entirely on prose.

In the following passage from *Coriolanus*, Volumnia speaks in prose.

I pray you, daughter, sing, or express yourself
in a more comfortable sort. If my son were my
husband, I should freelier rejoice in that
absence wherein he won honor than in the
embracements of his bed where he would
show most love..
(act 1, scene 3)

As his writing skill level increased, Shakespeare gradually employed **alliteration** (the repetition of a vowel or consonant in two or more words in a phrase), **assonance** (resembling vowel sounds in a line) and **onomatopoeia** (words with sounds imitating their meaning) to create deeply poetic, vibrant images on stage for the characters and his audience.

Classroom Activities

A Way with Words

Shakespeare's use of rhetoric as a device has been studied and quoted by powerful leaders for generations. In *Coriolanus*, the use of rhetoric is used to influence, persuade, deceive and motivate.

In groups, research the definition of rhetoric and the different rhetorical devices and analyze the examples from *Coriolanus* below and find three examples from modern speeches.

Strategies for Close Reading

When exploring text, it is also helpful to understand paraphrasing and operative words.

- **Paraphrasing** is a good way of making the text more accessible by putting it in your own words.
- **Operative words** are the words that are essential to telling the story. They are the most important words in a line of Shakespeare's text. Operative words are generally in this order of importance: verbs, nouns (including title and names the first time they are mentioned), adjectives and adverbs.

For each speech, complete the following:

- What is the objective of the speech? What does the speaker want from their audience?
- What rhetorical devices are used?
- Explain how the language is used successfully.
- What makes these speeches effective?
- Are they expressing the truth or giving the public what they want to hear?

Have each group present to the class the speeches they chose and identify the rhetorical devices used.

Martius (Coriolanus):

He that will give good words to thee will flatter
Beneath abhorring. What would you have, you curs,
That like nor peace nor war? The one affrights you,
The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares;
Where foxes, geese. You are no surer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is
To make him worthy whose offense subdues him
And curse that justice did it.

-act I, scene i

Volumnia:

My gentle Martius, worthy Caius, and
By deed-achieving honor newly named—
What is it?—Coriolanus must I call thee?
-act ii, scene i

Cominius:

Yet one time he did call me by my name.
I urged our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. Coriolanus
He would not answer to; forbad all names;
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
Till he had forged himself a name o' th' fire
Of burning Rome.

-act v, scene i

Leadership Skills

There are many types of leaders: leaders of families, schools, or teams; or, of a company, an army, or a country. But what makes someone a good leader? Work in groups to come up with a list of people you think exemplify the qualities of a good leader. Once this list is compiled, make a list of the attributes that a good leader should have.

Compare your lists: Do your leaders have all of the attributes? Which person has the most? Is there a difference between being a good leader and being an effective one? How would you differentiate between the two? Who is an example of being an effective leader, but not a good leader? Is it possible to be a good leader without being effective?

Where would Coriolanus and Aufidius fit in? Which attributes do they possess? Discuss the difference between the leadership attributes of Coriolanus, Aufidius and another leader from your list.

Classroom Activities

Traitor or Justified?

Traitor, *Noun*

1. a person who betrays another, a cause, or any trust.
2. a person who commits treason by betraying his or her country.

According to the definition above, many may call Coriolanus a traitor when he joins the Volscians and begins planning an assault on Rome. Below, you will find a list of famous figures whose names are also associated with the word “traitor.”

Next Steps

- Do you agree that all these people are traitors? If not, who is and who isn't a traitor and why?
- Do you think Coriolanus is a traitor?
- If Coriolanus or any of these people are not traitors, what would you call them? Can someone be a “justified traitor”?

Traitor or No?

LeBron James

Left his hometown team, the Cleveland Cavaliers, in 2010 to join the Miami Heat where he won an NBA Championship in 2012.

Joe Lieberman

Supported Republican candidate John McCain for President in 2008 after serving in the Senate as a Democrat since 1988.

Stanley Tookie Williams

Cofounder and one time leader of the notorious LA street gang, the Crips, became an anti-gang activist in the final years of his life.

Governor Chris Christie

Republican Governor of the state of New Jersey was called a traitor by some members of his party after he praised President Barack Obama for his assistance during Hurricane Sandy.

Kelly Clarkson

Winner of American Idol season one has made appearances on rival shows such as, The X Factor and The Voice.

Wade Boggs

Played the first 10 years of his MLB career with the Boston Red Sox and then signed a contract to play with the rival NY Yankees where he won a World Series in 1996.

Benedict Arnold

Served as a General for the American Continental Army at the beginning of the Revolutionary War but later defected to the British Army. While still serving for the American's he was given command of West Point and planned to surrender it to British forces; the plan was exposed before it could be brought to fruition.



Classroom Activities

The Spin Room

We live in the world of the 24-hour news cycle. With information so readily available there is no shortage of analysts who “spin” the news and try to influence how we feel about events that have transpired. The idea of putting either a negative or positive spin on things is not a new one. In *Coriolanus* we see Menenius put a positive spin on some of Coriolanus’ actions and words and Brutus and Sicinius put a negative spin on them. Below you will find some examples of questionable things Coriolanus says and does. If you had to put on spin on these examples, either negative or positive, what would you say?

The spin should be in your own words and can be written or presented orally. To make the activity even more exciting, you can plan out what you are going to say and then present your ideas in the form of a television tabloid show, such as E! News or Access Hollywood.

Coriolanus tells the Plebeians that it is their own fault that they are hungry because they are unwilling to fight bravely in battle.

How would you put a positive, pro-Coriolanus spin this?

How would you put a negative, anti-Coriolanus spin this?

In an effort to motivate his soldiers, Coriolanus tells his army that if they do not fight with him he will consider them part of the enemy and kill them.

How would you put a positive, pro-Coriolanus spin this?

How would you put a negative, anti-Coriolanus spin this?

After being banished from Rome, Coriolanus joins forces with Aufidius and begins planning an attack on Rome.

How would you put a positive, pro-Coriolanus spin this?

How would you put a negative, anti-Coriolanus spin this?

Born A Fighter?

Volumnia, Coriolanus’ mother is extremely proud of her son for being a warrior and fighting for Rome. In act 1, scene 3, she explains to her daughter-in-law Virgilia: “...Hear me profess sincerely: had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike, and none less dear than thine and my good Martius, I rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.”

Is it possible for a human being to be born a fighter? Or are they bred to be that way? If so, is it then fair for them to be punished for their violent actions? Dog fighting has been around for thousands of years, but it only became a felony in all 50 states in 2008. Diane Jessup, Founder of LawDogsUSA says; “A dog is only as dangerous as its owner allows it to be.” Unfortunately, there are a lot of owners who teach their dogs to fight. Because of their loyal nature, ability to be trained easily and their strong build, pit bulls are a popular breed to train as fighters – but they aren’t born as violent dogs. When they are rescued from fighting, they require a lot of rehabilitation to erase the horrific training and sometimes they continue to be violent toward humans as well as other dogs. Sadly, these dogs can be difficult to give up for adoption, and the whole breed suffers from the stigma of violence. But who is to blame? Is it the dogs, who commit the violent actions? Or the owners who raised them to fight?



Beginning when he was very young, Coriolanus was taught to be a warrior and to die with honor. Should the blame for his crimes be put on Volumnia for how she raised him? Was Coriolanus actually fighting for the good of his country? Or was he just fighting because that was all he knew? Can he be considered a traitor if he did not care about what he was fighting for, but only cared to fight?

Compare and contrast how Coriolanus’ violent ways connect to pit bulls and dog fighting. Use quotes from *Coriolanus* and research about the history of dog fighting to defend your opinions.

Discussion Questions

Politics

Centuries after the Roman Empire, has politics changed?



1) Do the politicians in the play tell the truth? Which ones? What are their motives to lie or to tell the truth?

2) What do you think is more important to Brutus and Sicinius, personal gain or the greater good of Rome? Why? What makes you think that? What about Coriolanus?

3) Do our politicians today tell us the truth? If not, do they lie? Or, tell a partial truth, or a subjective truth? Is there something about us (the public) that makes them not trust us?

6) What roles do different types of media play in politics today? Newspapers? Television networks? Comedy shows? The internet? Do you think it's easier or harder for the public to find out the truth with all of these different media outlets available? Do you think it is easier for us to have our voices heard than it was for the citizens in *Coriolanus*?

7) Why is this play relevant? What comparisons can you make between *Coriolanus* and America in 2013?

8) If you could create a version of a perfect governing system; what would it look like? Would you model the structure on Ancient Rome? The British Parliament? The American government?

Loyalty

Loyalty and honor are incredibly important values in Coriolanus, just as they are influential in our lives and relationships today. There are many different kinds of loyalty: family, friendship, patriotism, devotion to a cause or allegiance to a moral code or religion. Deciding which loyalties are most important to preserve—and which are breakable—can tip the scales of a battle or change a person's fate.

1) Who is loyal in the play? Which characters never betray or change sides?

2) Who is disloyal in the play? Are they justified? What do you think is motivating them?

3) Is Coriolanus a villain or a victim? Does he get what he deserves? What about Aufidius?

4) Where should a person's loyalty lie? Should we always be true to ourselves? Should we put our family or ourselves first? Should we put our country before ourselves? Why? In what situations should one kind of loyalty trump another?

5) Whose influence and opinion is most important to you? Who would you listen to if everyone was giving you different advice? Think about why you would choose that person's advice. Do they have the same values? Are you afraid to not follow their advice? Do you want to be like them? How does the relationship you have with them affect your decision to listen to them?

6) Do you have a Volumnia in your life? Is there someone who can persuade you into doing what they think is best? Is there someone who you always want to please?

7) "To thine own self be true." Coriolanus must plead for the votes from the Plebeians, which he does with reluctance because it is against his character. What is an example of something that you want so badly that you would be willing to go against your principles to obtain it?

Resource List

Shakespeare Dictionaries

- Schmidt, Alexander. *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*. Dover, 1971.
- Onion, C.T. *A Shakespeare Glossary*. Oxford University Press, 1986.

Books on Shakespeare

- Asimov, Isaac. *Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare*. Doubleday, 1978.
- Cahn, Victor L. *The Plays of Shakespeare: A Thematic Guide*. Greenwood Press, 2001.
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- Fallon, Robert Thomas. *A Theatregoer's Guide to Shakespeare*. Ivan M. Dee, 2001.
- Gibson, Janet and Rex Gibson. *Discovering Shakespeare's Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Will in the World*. W.W. Norton, 2004.
- Holmes, Martin. *Shakespeare and His Players*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972.
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- Linklater, Kristin. *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice*. Theatre Communications Group, 1992.
- McDonald, Russ. *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: An Introduction with Documents*. Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996.
- Pritchard, R. E. *Shakespeare's England*. Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999.
- Papp, Joseph and Elizabeth Kirkland. *Shakespeare Alive*. Bantam Books, 1988.

Books on Teaching Shakespeare

- Gibson, Rex. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Reynolds, P. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Rosenblum, Joseph. *A Reader's Guide to Shakespeare*. Salem Press, Inc., 1998.
- Toropov, Brandon. *Shakespeare for Beginners*. Writers and Readers Publishing Inc., 1997.

Websites

- **Shakespeare Theatre Company**—<http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/education>
ON SHAKESPEARE: Articles and information about Shakespeare's life and world
- **In Search of Shakespeare: Shakespeare in the Classroom**—<http://www.pbs.org/shakespeare/educators/>
The companion website to Michael Wood's four-part PBS series *In Search of Shakespeare*, this site includes extensive research about Shakespeare's life and works, as well as interactive features.
- **Folger Shakespeare Library**—<http://www.folger.edu>
Includes excellent resources for further reading about Shakespeare, as well as fun games and information designed specifically for students and teachers.

Standards of Learning

The activities and question sequences found in the Folio supports grade 8-12 Common Core standards in English Language Arts. Primary content areas addressed include but are not limited to:

READING LITERATURE

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of Reading and Complexity

WRITING

(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-12.2)

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8-12.1)

LANGUAGE

(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-12.3,4, 4)

Theatre Etiquette

The phrase “**theatre etiquette**” refers to the special rules of behavior that are called for when attending a theatre performance.

Above all, it is important to remember that the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them. Be respectful of the actors and your fellow audience members by being attentive and observing the general guidelines below:

Before you go:

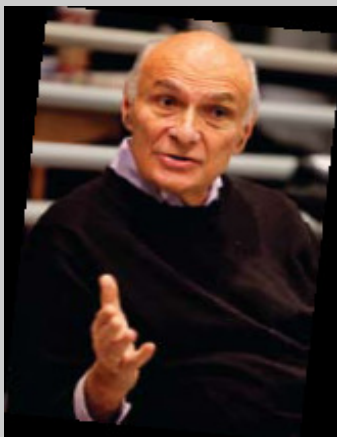
- *Coriolanus* plays take place before cell phones and other fun technology existed. Please help us create the environment by turning off your cell phone and other electronic devices (iPods, games, etc.). Not only will it be historically inaccurate, but it can be very distracting, not to mention embarrassing, when a cell phone goes off during a performance. The lights from cell phones and other electronic devices are also a big distraction, so please no text messaging.
- We’re sure that you would never stick your gum underneath your chair or spill food and drinks, but because this theatre is so new and beautiful, we ask that you spit out your gum before entering the theatre and leave all food and drinks in the lobby or the coat check.
- We don’t want you to miss out on any of the action of the play, so please visit the restroom before the performance begins.



*Students at a SHAKESPEARIENCE production of Cymbeline.
Photo by Nicole Geldart.*

During the performance:

- Please feel free to have honest reactions to what is happening on stage. You can laugh, applaud and enjoy the performance. However, please don’t talk during the performance; it is extremely distracting to other audience members and the actors. Save discussions for intermission and after the performance.



Thoughts about the importance of being an audience member from Shakespeare Theatre Company Artistic Director Michael Kahn

“When you go to the theatre, you are engaging with other living, breathing human beings, having an immediate human response. In the theatre you sense that all of this may never happen again in this particular way.

As a member of the audience, you are actually part of how that’s developing—you have a hand in it ... You are part of a community where you are asked to be compassionate, perhaps to laugh with or grieve as well as to understand people, lives and cultures different from your own.”